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ZARATHUSHTRA AND THE LÓGOS.

My esteemed friends the Trustees of the Sir J. Jejeebhoy Translation fund in Bombay requested me now some years ago to refute the doctrine that the gāthīc Avesta dated from A. D., or 100 B. C. This curious view had been advanced, I need not say by whom, nor why I have delayed my publication. The theory was suggested chiefly upon the ground of a supposed similarity in the ideas involved in Philo's *lógos* and those which surround the *vohumanah* of the *Gāthas*, one of the chief *Amesha-spendis* of the later, but still genuine Avesta. The general subject of philonian influence has had my attention since '76 more or less closely. The shortest discussion of the Greek *lógos*, which is at the same time authoritative and exhaustive, is Heinze's *Lehre vom Logos in der griechischen philosophie*, 1872; much valuable information is also afforded in his work, packed full of facts, by Dr. Carl Siegfried; see in his '*Philo von Alexandria als Ausleger des Alten Testaments*, Jena, 1875.¹

I began all my well-meant studies with an investigation of the history of the Gnosis, looking for traces of it in Philo. This was earlier than '72. And I had found out Matter's book upon the subject, which is by this time another quarter of a century old.

Matter held strongly to the view that much influence had been exercised by the Zend Avesta upon the gnostic developments; so after some years of enjoyable labour in Germany and Italy upon the Greeks and Germans, with reams upon Kant, etc., as the result, I turned in '75 to the Avesta.

In the first place it is *asha*, who is the Vedic *ṛtá* who, or which, should be compared, and not *vohumanah*. For *asha*, as the rhythm of law in nature, the sacrifice, and the creation is indeed a *Lógos*; and also holds decidedly a nearer place to *Ahura* in the *Gāthas*

¹ See also Gladisch *Herakleitos und Zoroaster*, 1859, now badly antiquated; also Daehne, *Geschichtliche Darstellung der Jüdisch-alexandrischen Religions-philosophie*, Halle, 1834; also Keferstein, *Philo's Lehre von den göttlichen Mittelwesen*, Leipzig, 1846. See Zeller's incomparable sketch, as of course. Tauchnitz edition of Philo, 1880, may be used, as it gives all that is practically needed and holds in view the emendations of Mangey; it is moreover very cheap.

than vohumanah, who is 'sane benevolence' rather than 'law.'¹ Vohumanah elbowed himself, or itself, so to speak, into the first place in the later parsism and even in the later but still genuine Avesta, owing to a misapprehension on the part of the early pahlavi commentators at Y. 28, 2 or 3. Asha should therefore be chiefly in our thoughts here. As to the time-honoured allusion to the Honover, which has been so seriously recalled by writers on this subject, the mention of it again in this connection, while Asha or even Vohumanah are forthcoming, is enough to overpower any Zendist who has a sense of humour, or a human temper; for the 'Honover' is nothing in the world but the late degeneration of the name of the post-gâthic piece, the Ahunvairya; so 'hono-ver,' and has no original meaning as a lógos in any Greek sense whatsoever; though, for the matter of that, if we had no Gâtha, then of course anything which might be called the 'word' 'which was before the creation' would do; cp. Y. XIX. As to the lógos of Heraclitus, that was not asha nor vohumanah for the simple reason that it was supreme, wholly materialistic, and yet later called 'divine'; and its analogon, if analogy were possible between the splendid pioneer panlogist and Zarathushtra, would be Ahura Mazda himself, and not Asha nor any of the Ameshas in any sense. Yet here we have the first occurrence of the word (not to speak too strictly),² and this was the proper beginning of the 'lógos' in the Greek Philosophy.

When people began to talk about the 'absolute intelligence' according to which 'nothing happens or is made in vain,' this looked a little more like it; but it was in 462 B. C. circa³ when Anaxagoras first invaded Athens with his *νοῦς* that we really settle down to the question. But if 'mind stirred matter like a whirlpool' after it had rested during 'endless time,'⁴ we begin to get a glimpse of the doctrine that it (matter) was inert, etc.; and then at last that it became so full of all things evil that a series of 'causes' had to be introduced between the Supreme Being and the created world lest his holiness should be defiled by his own evil creature. The last of these agents became the 'Demiurge.'

¹ I generally write vohumanah and ashah where they mean attributes, Asha and Vohumanah where they are personified.

² See Sextus Empiricus, *adversus Math.* 27, 127 flg. quoted by Heinze, p. 44, where the adjective *θεῖος* or *θειον* is mentioned twice; but he hardly means to give the impression that H. used the word in this connection.

³ See Zeller, *Erster Theil*, p. 974.

⁴ An Avesta expression by the way; see Vend. 19.

At a first superficial glance we might be disposed to go off with the idea that we have found an analogy here, not with Asha indeed, but with the *Geūsh tashan*. A *Geūsh tashan*, 'Herd's-maker' takes up the dialogue at Y. 29, 2, either as another name for Ahura, as an intimate associate; but my business at present is first with *asha* or *vohumanah*. Here we seemed also to have a fine analogon ready to our hand.

The cause of the created world according to the greatest (Greek) moralist was the 'goodness' of God, which makes a very pleasing '*vohu manah*'; but our point here also is not so much an accidental coincidence in the shape of a common idea as the interior character of two separate schemes. Why were any intermediaries needed at all, even according to Anaxagoras and Socrates? The reason continued ever the same; matter was inert, evil, defiled, etc. And just as this doctrine of intermediaries developed through the series of subsequent men, so long as there were any successors, so the doctrine of the worthlessness of matter seems to have become intensified, till Philo at last had no good word left for it.

This dualism between matter and God was indeed repudiated by the Stoa and those who came under its influence, but only to be revived in Greek-Egypt by the predecessors of Philo and then by the alexandrian himself.

What I wished to say in a few words was this, which no expert anywhere will deny, viz., that the entire concept of the platonian dualism, really due to Anaxagoras, is totally foreign to the Avesta. Matter as such was no evil or detested thing with any Zoroastrian writer, original or late, as there was no 'chasm' between it and God. And the platonian *νοῦς*, seldom called by its author 'the *lógos*,' was, with its successors, thought out to bridge such a supposed chasm. Therefore such a *lógos* possessed no interior analogy with either *asha* or *vohumanah* for the reason stated.

The difference between the two is radical, a certain superficial resemblance in the expressions describing the two concepts to the contrary notwithstanding. For it was, and simply is, impossible that any two detailed systems of such a character and on the same general subject, theogony, etc., could be stated without a strong external likeness between the several items. How could any 'theogony' be thought out without an idea of 'benevolence' and of 'justice'? Such ideas are universal and not to be excluded. While Plato established more fully than any predecessor the idea

of the chasm between God and his (Plato's) idea of matter, i. e. 'necessity' (sic), he did so only less pointedly showing a series of mediating 'powers' or ideas; but Philo pushed vigorously on till he made his *lógos* the great intermediary. And this brings into the boldest relief the essential difference between his *lógos* and the Avesta as stated above. Nowhere is there, I repeat as I have said, anywhere so much as a surmise in the old Avesta that the material substratum of the Universe is evil in any sense; for the the good and the evil creations are good or evil because of the character of the 'first two Spirits.' Ahura did not need any intermediary whatsoever in creating his good creation. And just here indeed this especial feature of both Asha and Vohumanah becomes important to us; it is that both the one and the other were 'created' (by Ahura) that is to say, where they are considered otherwise than as His attributes; see the *gātha*-places, whereas the platonic-philonian *lógos* was neither created nor uncreated, (sic); it emanated (so) from the *ἄν*.

The *Geūsh tashan* or Herd-maker, to return to this, is a term which, as introduced at Y. 29, 2 and in Y. 31, 9 seems to have conveyed the idea that there existed in the mind of the composer a necessity for a secondary maker of 'the herd,' that is to say of the 'creation'; but this is only an apparent necessity founded upon a false inference. Ideas, like events, cast their shadows before;—and it is probably true that there already began to form itself within the minds of those who toyed with speculation a vague conception of an associate creator; motivated probably by a reason diametrically the opposite to that which influenced Plato and his later Alexandrian disciple; but this would show an anterior date for the *gātha*-places, whereas the object held in view by those who advanced the comparison of *vohumanah* and the *lógos* was to impair, if not to destroy, the long settled claims of the *Gāthas* to antiquity.

Be this as it might, in the *Gātha* itself the term '*Geūsh tashan*' is distinctly taken apart and applied to Ahura. See *Yasna*, 51, 7.

'Thou who didst create (*tashō*) the kine, the waters and the plants, long life and health—' . . . *Tashō* is the verbal, *tashan* (*tashā*) the nominal form.

Another item, has, however, as I confess, often given me pause and many an hour of long and curious reflection. It is the occurrence of the expression 'the better than the good'; i. e. the '*summun bonum*.'

I have not been at all disturbed by the fact that almost its mate

occurs in a list of similar academic terms in Philo as a title of his God. He was among a mass of things τὸ κρεῖττον μὲν ἀγαθὸν.¹ For in the Gātha it has nothing to do with such an application. In Y. 43, 2 'the better than the good' is the end, or goal, toward which the beatified approaches, whether here or hereafter, the summum bonum: 'thus that better than the good may he approach, who hath taught us the straight paths of the law.' But I have been always deeply impressed, not to say staggered, by the occurrence of such a thought at all. What a depth and refinement of ideas it discloses.

After a little, however, one recovers from the startled suspicion; as item after item of a similar cast comes back to the recollection. What could be more clear, pointed or profound in an intellectual sense than the astonishing words 'rewards for this bodily life and the mental', and 'whose own soul reproaches them,' 'astonishing' for a hymn in Iran at even the latest (early) date ever suggested, till at the next moment we have the speculative problem categorically put at Y. 28, 11.

'Teach thou me forth to proclaim from thy mouth of spirit the laws by which the primeval world arose'; literally, "forth to me teach from thy spirit to proclaim with thy mouth those *things* (i. e. laws, powers, or causes) in accordance with which the first world arose; i. e. became existent, 'bavat.'" Once again at home amidst such gāthic concepts, we must simply surrender to the *vanhēuš vakyō*—'the better than the good':—and no longer doubt that the entire gāthic literature at that time and place was only not philosophic because it was theosophic, so to speak, in a firm, and by no means in a certain modern, sense.

Very many expressions conveying ideas similar to *asha* and *vohumanah* were unavoidable in any system such as that of Philo and his sympathetic predecessors. No one at all like Philo could possibly write so much and say it so elaborately without redoubling scraps of speech which remind us of *asha* at every step. In fact he said so much that he used up the Greek vocabulary, pretty nearly, in his fervour. The two themes were practically identical; both the authors were keen and pious, each had predecessors doubtless whose 'call' they were perpetuating. How is it possible that throngs of expressions closely allied should not occur in what the two teachers said? But their principles on the *lógos* and its business were simply radically

¹ De Legatione ad Gaium II, 546.

opposed. In fact if I had to make a choice, (I for one) would call *asha* nearer the *lógos* of the panlogistic stoics, or to that sublime fire-*lógos* of the great Ephesian, the wonderful concept to which I first alluded, though both he and the stoics practically pushed the gods aside, for neither of them accepted the so-called 'chasm' between a God and matter, and each of them lacked that one incompatibility with the Zoroastrian concepts.

Not wishing to encroach upon space here, I have elaborated this subject (so far as articles in reviews or journals can well do so) in the July numbers of the *Journal of the R. Asiatic Society*, and of the *Asiatic Quarterly Review*,¹ to which the reader is referred. They embody the conclusions of well-nigh a quarter of a century, and of some four years of special labour on the Greeks and the Germans from the spring of '72.

In the essay which I have been preparing for my friends in Bombay I have also elaborately cited all the texts, overdoing the matter as usual, unfortunately, with unnecessary care.

With regard to the influence of Mazdaism upon Heraclitus,—there is no doubt at all that such a man as he was knew a very great deal about Mazdaism, so far as the form of it which surged about him during certain years of his prime was knowable;—though it is somewhat curious that no gibe upon it has survived from him. The armies of Darius were in possession of the territory up to the gates of Ephesus for periods longer or shorter; and Ephesus was not captured for the very reason that it always stood true to Persia; and it is conceded that he (Heraclitus himself) was invited to the court of Darius, the false letters being the echo of the fact. That the dualism of the Mazda-worship existed in the lores of the Persian priests who accompanied the monarch, I hold to be most probable, if not practically certain,—and also that Heraclitus was much interested as well as amused by what he could learn of it; but that it really influenced his entire departure I hardly feel. He was a singularly original person, and I do not think that the 'barbaric' lore of his hated enemy could have been the originating cause of his own astounding system. A system which, as I think, a great many of us are beginning to feel more and more, came very near indeed to suggesting the 'key' to the great Enigma.

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¹ See also the last number, Jan. 1902.